

What is claimed is:

1. A method for diagnosing a defect in an adjustment mechanism for adjusting a valve lift of at least one inlet valve in an internal combustion engine, the operation of which is regulated by an operation control device, comprising:

monitoring an operating parameter of the internal combustion engine, which is set to a target value when the valve lift is actually adjusted by the operation control device; and

deducing a defect in the adjustment mechanism from a discrepancy between the operating parameter and the target value when a valve lift adjustment is triggered.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the monitored operating parameter is an air/fuel ratio.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the monitored operating parameter is a speed or torque of the internal combustion engine.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the monitored operating parameter is a pressure or mass air flow in a suction pipe of the internal combustion engine.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the operation is carried out individually for each cylinder in the internal combustion engine.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the method is performed in the internal combustion engine with discrete valve lift adjustment.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the operation control device is configured so that on identification of a defect in the adjustment mechanism it regulates the operation of the internal combustion engine according to

an actual lift of an inlet valve at a time of an activated valve lift adjustment.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the operation control device activates an error display on identification of a defect in the adjustment mechanism.